

*MISSION: The Annual Conference Program Planning Committee chooses the Annual Conference theme, arranges for Keynote and Judy Lecture speakers, solicits and organizes workshop presenters, and provides support for (and guidance to) the Local Arrangements Committee of the hosting congregation.*

**Prairie Star District Annual Conference  
Program Planning Committee  
Saturday, October 13, 2012  
The UU Fellowship of Ames, Ames, IA**

**ATTENDING:** Robin Taylor (chair), Kathy Bowman, Rev. Lisa Doege, Julie Enersen, Ginny Malcomson, Roger Upham, Ben Wallace, Maria Wilson; Nancy Heege (PSD District Executive); Robyn Miessler-Kubanek (LAC Chair, 2013), Sam Wormley (Program Area Coordinator). The Rev. Tom Capo Skyped in from Cedar Rapids in the morning!

**ABSENT:** Mike Schwab, Phil and Joanne Roudebush (LAC Co-Chairs, 2014).

**M E E T I N G**

**10 a.m. Chalice Lighting**

**Introductions & Check-In** ~ We welcomed Lisa Doege and Julie Enersen to their first committee meeting, and asked everyone to share a question we should ask them over lunch!

**10:10 a.m. Program Committee Update ~ Robin**

**The Minutes** from 8/11/12 were approved with no further corrections since Sarah Greene's changes had been added.

Robin noted that Christine Robinson has signed our letter of understanding, and has offered to do a workshop. Although Stefan Jonasson has given his verbal promise to do both, he has not sent in his paper work and had not submitted a workshop idea. Robin had talked to him about a session on finding inspiration or spiritual fulfillment when your church life is in Chaos.

**Back-up speaker** ~ Tom Capo suggested using someone from Prairiewood, a Franciscan Community in Cedar Rapids, but the committee felt that it might not be ideal since the theme is the history (Friday night) and future of Unitarian Universalism (Saturday morning). Joanne Roudebush had asked Thom Belote about leading a session (with the thought that he might be available for backup), but he is having a baby soon and not interested at this time. If Betty Mills from Bismark or John Cummins come to the conference, either one might make a good back-up speaker for Friday night's keynote address on history. We thought the Sermon Contest winner could be tapped to read the winning sermon in a pinch, and will make that part of the plan for next year!

**10:20 a.m. Sermon Competition Update ~ Ben**

Ben did not know of any entries yet, and thought we needed more promotion. Sarah has already sent it to the congregations for their Worship Committees to promote to a lay leaders. **Ben will write a blurb and get it to Nancy H., Lisa, and Tom Capo so that they can work on spreading the word.**

**10:30 a.m. PSD Update ~ Nancy**

In August, Boards from all three districts met in Davenport and agreed to move forward by proposing a regional governance structure, to begin on July 1, 2013. They heard reports and proposals, and discussed the future of Camp UniStar. A Bylaws committee is working on new Bylaws; the Linchpin Committee is working on communication issues and educating delegates; and ministers in all the districts have endorsed the proposals. Staff from the three districts has been working collaboratively for a few years on trainings, workshops, etc. Together, they have created goals for the 6 district staff members.

Nancy is working on administrative structure for region. Gretchen Ohmann has been hired as the MidAmerica Region Technology Coordinator. Sarah Greene will be the new fulltime Regional Administrator. They will search in the spring for a half-time bookkeeper. They are working to envision

new programs and new ways to sustain services more economically in the region.

Nancy said the program piece and staff piece will move forward, regardless of the vote, because they need to save on administrative costs immediately. She expects that even if one district voted no and the others voted yes, they would give them another year to think it over and just move forward with staffing changes, etc.

**The future of the Annual Conference under Regionalization:** In 2014 there will be a Regional conference in at least three locations. Nancy could envision 6 locations, if we do some live streaming like the PSD has been doing for a while. Since the Regional conferences are on three different weekends, live streaming could happen this year even. Nancy is talking with Mark Gibbons looking at **virtual voting**. The UUA has been experimenting with this the last few years of GA. Nancy feels this is an exciting time in terms of looking at what possibilities are there.

**Right now, the other two districts do not have Annual Conference committees**—their conferences are run by the paid staff. Nancy feels that our PSD conferences are so much richer because of the many volunteers who work on them, and she wouldn't want to see the staff taking on the additional responsibility. Any decisions or changes for the future will be made on the staff level.

In the spring, the 4 districts in the west - from Hawaii and Alaska to Wyoming and Montana, are going to have one regional conference in San Jose, with 4 district business meetings. Nancy is going to attend and is interested to see how the attendance works. This last year they celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Alaska and a lot of people attended.

Robin voiced a concern that these conferences can be beyond the budget of many people, especially when travel distances are increased.

Roger - sounds like regionalization is moving ahead anyway and that staff are just working to get buy-in from districts. Nancy - at this point we have 3 boards and 3 governance structures, what we are asking is should we have 1 board and 1 governance structure? She pointed out we need to have legal standing under the UUA.

**11: 15 a.m. Local Arrangements 2013 Update ~ Robyn**  
**DATE:** April 5-7, 2013  
**THEME:** *Inspire the Future We Envision*  
**LOCATION:** Marriott Cedar Rapids

**Reminder: The goals of this conference are to:**

1. *Inspire the Future We Envision*
2. Prepare and inform delegates to vote on issues of Regionalization
3. Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the PSD
4. Create a meaningful multigenerational conference for families/individuals of all ages

**Hotel** - Robyn and Heather, the LAC facility person, were finally able to tour the hotel and meet with banquet staff. They have an industry cook in their congregation who they had asked for help with the menu, hoping it would be less expensive, but it was *exceedingly high!* **Robyn will work with the hotel to revise menu to stay within budget.**

**AV-** Robyn was able to talk with one of the AV companies. He is sending Robyn information next week, have it broken out. Robyn asked for options and details for the AV so that she can see the costs for all of the parts.

**Entertainment** team has decided to go a different route. Saturday night they have booked a local blues guitarist (recently named a semifinalist in the 2012 International Blues Challenge) named **Bryce Janey**, who will be doing a solo act. <http://www.thejaney.com> They are looking at having another group, Deep Dish Divas, possibly for Friday night.

**Youth** have met and come up with workshop ideas. Based on which ones get approved, they will assign people to lead them. Robyn had an email exchange with the youth coordinator about next steps. One of the challenges is that the previous youth coordinator got a full-time job elsewhere, so they lost some of the experience. Robyn asked them to be party planners, come up with themes, and look at bridging youth. Robyn would like to give them a room that they can use for all of their stuff (Cedar Rapids Room, which is in the hotel, but apart from the rest of the conference space).

**Bridging Ceremony** - Robyn suggested it and gave Ben's name to the Youth Coordinator. Tom pointed out that this youth group is too young to have any bridging youth, so there may not be any interest, although it would "inspire the future!"

**Child care**- Ginny pointed out the advantage of having children in the upstairs suites possibly for youth or childcare, since in the suites you can bring your own food (and can save the 22% service fee and 7% tax on top of regular cost).

**Children's programming** - Cedar Rapids DRE has background in daycare so she is experienced and has ideas on workshops, etc. that can include the children. She has ideas for arts and crafts, making chalices, has a person to be a lifeguard, and if the weather is nice, wants to take them across the street to feed the ducks. Unfortunately, she proposed a \$6,000 budget (*argh!!*), so **Robyn is going to have to talk with her about new expectations!**

Nancy noted that Davenport was the last AC that had a lot of integrated children's activities, but there was some outside funding to support this.

**Young Adult Activities** - **Maria is working with Sophie in CR to work on Young Adult activities.**

They are considering Young Adult activity ideas such as a trivia contest, Pub Quiz, or scavenger hunt. Possibly a Young Adult breakfast table on Saturday AM.

**Table Topics** - There was some discussion as to whether or not table topics really work. Maria thought they work if they are interesting. Someone suggested Affinity Groups instead. Lisa suggested giving people a sharpie and having them write their own table topic or affinity group.

**Recruitment Update** - Robyn has found almost all the people she needs for the LAC team.

Kyle Hill - workshop coordinator

Barb and Scott Gay - Board meeting liaisons

Linda Niemann - (the Dubuque Music Director) Choir Director

Exhibits - *coordinator still needed.*

Bookstore - filled.

Budget person - *still needed*

Has a registrar - several people on the committee

Choir Director - Linda Niemann from Dubuque

**25 Exhibitors in the Waterfall area**, would free up the Rosewood room and be in the "pre-conference area."

**Registration process** needs to be well tested, per Roger. Robyn talked to Sarah Greene, they have another event happening that they can use as a testing event, should have the wrinkles ironed out. Roger suggested modifying the form so that you can get the permission for children on there, and so you can save your registration and go back to finish it later. It would be nice to have the workshop descriptions on there so you don't have to go back and forth from the form to the website to figure out what you want to sign up for. Maybe a "shopping cart" format?

Suggestion to have a confirmation email after registration to thank them and make sure they know what is going on. **Roger will serve as an advisor to the Registration process.**

**Volunteers** Tom Capo said it would be helpful for people who are volunteering if they could talk to others who have been at the annual meetings, etc to answer questions. **Roger said he would be happy to put anyone in touch with his committee from last year.**

**Budget** - working on it, got real numbers from the hotel, not on AV yet. Did send preliminary budget to Sarah and Robin, have a document answering Sarah's questions.

### **Saturday Schedule**

9am Lecture  
Workshop A - 7 spaces  
Lunch  
Workshop B - 5 spaces  
Business Meeting/Workshop C - 6 Spaces  
Business Meeting/ Reflection Activities

### **10:45 a.m. Annual Conference Committee Structures ~ Sam**

Sam's role as conference coordinator is to coordinate the various standing committees: Awards, Site Selection, Program Planning, Archives, and Local Arrangements.

Archives does not really exist at this point. Sam thinks a coordinator may still be needed to coordinate between the old districts for the new regional conference, helping with simultaneous conferences, but he thinks the coordinator could be moved to a different structure. Robin proposed that a part-time regional staff member may be needed to do all that. Sam thought it should be a paid coordinator who handles logistics, communications and registration.

Nancy pointed out that the Annual Conferences arose as a way to attract people to come to the business meetings. Now, with regionalization we may be moving to smaller cluster conferences.

Ben has a model and business client, the Association of Christian Schools, which just did a conference in 32 places. Ben will find out- what needs to be done, equipment, and technology to make it happen. What company is used and what the cost is, and whether they get good quality video and audio.

Nancy - In terms of Regionalization, they have talked about program on a high level, but have not talked about how specific things, such as the Annual Conference, are going to happen.

Julie said that the UU Musicians Network has a part-time conference coordinator whose salary comes directly from the registration fees.

Nancy said the Staff would need to make a decision about whether there will be a conference in 2015.

**January 12, 2013 Virtual Meeting:** Conference Call or Skype?? Nancy will investigate using Skype premium and the number of connections she can use for our January meeting. Nancy has a board meeting in the morning. Can we change the meeting to the afternoon? Let's try for 1-4 p.m., and hope that we can solve all the issues much sooner??

**12:30 p.m. POTLUCK LUNCH ~ Thank you, everyone, for all the wonderful food!!**

**1:30 p.m. WORKSHOP SELECTION ~ Ginny Malcomson**

We counted 28 workshop applications, if we included one for choir, one for the ministers' meeting, one for the sermon contest winner, and two sessions for information for the delegates (which still need to be described). There was nothing obvious to cut. Instead, we decided to "repurpose" a couple of the offerings to be slated AFTER the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop slot (but while the business meeting may still be going on). We wanted to have some **time for reflection** on the theme, and thought that Rev. David Breeden's writing workshop would be perfect here. Also thought this might be a good spot for Stefan's as yet undefined workshop (tentatively called "Open Chat with Stefan." We decided this might be a nice place to put the UU Pagan workshop, which includes a simple ritual of connection with the earth. Robin said she would talk to all three presenters about this idea.

4 p.m. Meeting Adjourned!

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Taylor, Chair  
Program Planning Committee

## FUTURE MEETING DATES!!

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### Annual Conference 2014 :

**DATE:** April 11-13, 2014

**THEME:** *Hunger for Justice*

**LOCATION:** Ramada Convention Center Downtown Topeka

420 Southeast 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., I-70 at W. Exit 362B-E. 361B

Topeka, KS. 66607

<http://www.ramada.com/hotels/kansas/topeka/ramada-convention-center-downtown-topeka/hotel-overview>

## FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**WINTER MEETING:** Saturday, January 12, 2013 ~ 1-4p.m. \* = Note new time!!

Via conference call or Skype (Nancy will inform us how to do this!)

*Focus: Trouble-shooting for AC 2013*

*Any revisions to the Survey Monkey this year?*

*Speaker Ideas for AC 2014 "Hunger for Justice"*

**PSD Conference:** 9 p.m. Friday night check-in with Robyn (in case she needs help or advice at this point!), April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
11 a.m. Sunday to debrief, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**SPRING MEETING:** May 4 or 19?? ~ 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
UU Fellowship of Ames, Ames, IA

*Focus: Reviewing Survey Monkey Evaluations*

*Working on AC 2014!*

**SUMMER MEETING:** Aug 3 or 10?  
Location: Topeka, KS?

**FALL MEETING:** October 5 or 12? ~ 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
UU Fellowship of Ames, Ames, IA